Road Safety Audit (RSA)

Introduction

In the past, the Bureau of Traffic Engineering conducted traffic studies from a reactive position, reviewing only a specific location of concern based on a request. While this process worked, it was not efficient and hindered the bureau from effectively addressing the entire state highway system. In an attempt to provide a more comprehensive and thorough review, and to immediately attend to locations which may require safety improvements, the bureau began conducting countywide road safety audits.

RSA

A RSA is a proactive and thorough process to complete a traffic study of the Kansas state highway system county by county. The purpose of the RSA is to give the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) an effective and powerful tool to actively recognize and immediately attend to locations which may need safety improvements. The audit is broken down into three phases: office review, field review, and report.

Office Review

The office review phase consists of analyzing the accidents along all state routes in a county. This includes the Kansas routes, the United States routes, and the Interstate routes (excluding the Turnpike). The accident analysis can help reveal high accident locations and definable accident patterns which may be corrected through changes in roadway geometry or the use of traffic control devices. The office review phase also entails soliciting information from the county, cities, and local KDOT personnel regarding locations of concern, as well as reviewing video-log, past traffic study files, and traffic control resolutions.

Field Review

In the field review phase, an engineer drives all routes in the county. The engineer will observe and record data on a variety of traffic-related categories including roadway characteristics, geometry, railroads, speed limits, sight distance, pavement markings, signing, and other traffic control devices. The engineer may visit with city officials, county officials, and KDOT district/area personnel to gain insight on locations to be reviewed and to answer any questions.

Report

Once the field review is complete, necessary traffic field data (traffic counts, speed data, school data, etc.) will be obtained. The data will be analyzed, then the data as well as the recommendations are presented in a final report. The report is sent to the county, cities, and KDOT offices both for information and the execution of recommendations.

Schedule

The Bureau of Traffic Engineering is in the process of reviewing all counties. After the state is completely reviewed, the bureau will continue to do RSAs with the goal being to complete follow-up reviews every two years.

Requests for Specific Traffic Studies

When a study request is received, an engineer reviews the location on video-log and reviews the accident history. If the accident rate is above average, or if an unusual conditions exists, a traffic study is initiated for the spot location. If not, the request is kept on file until a RSA for that county is started.

Benefits

A well-managed road safety audit program can have many positive effects:

- Enhances the safety of the state highway system.
- Allows more efficient use of personnel.
- Allows the Bureau of Traffic Engineering an opportunity to work more closely with cities, counties, and KDOT personnel.
- Reviews locations which have never been studied or were studied a number of years ago.
- Promotes consistency of traffic control devices throughout the state.
- Creates confidence in a thoroughly studied and up-to-date highway system.